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ABSTRACT

This publication is a response to the need for better understanding of the Malaysian student population studying U.S. institutions of higher education. Part 1 is an introduction to Malaysia, with two articles giving background information. The first is a history of Malaysia and the development of its education system, by Fatimah Hamid-Don of Ohio University. The second is a concise description of the Malaysian education system today, by Joann Stedman of Columbia University. Part 2 describes the parameters of educational exchange between Malaysia and the United States in three chapters. The first outlines demographic factors of the population of Malaysian students coming to the United States, written by Dr. Marti Thomson of the Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange. The second chapter is the text of a policy speech delivered in 1985, by the Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, Tan Sri Dato Haji Othman bin Abdul Malek. The third chapter describes Malaysia's presence in this country via its student departments, written by Baharom Othman of the Malaysian Embassy in the United States. Part 3 deals with the students themselves, the customs and traditions of each of Malaysia's three major ethnic groups, as well as an analysis of Malaysian students' cultural characteristics as they affect the students' adjustment to American campuses and lifestyle. Part 4 contains a selective bibliography of 30 references and a listing of addresses of Malaysian Student Departments and organizations concerned with Malaysian-American educational exchange. Contains 25 references. (GLR)

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National Association for Foreign Student Affairs

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS

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Malaysian Students in U.S. Colleges and Universities

Edited by
Alan W. Boyd and Elaine M. Noss

National Association for Foreign Student Affairs
1986

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) is a non-profit membership association that provides training, information, and other educational services to professionals in the field of international educational exchange.

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Introduction

Malaysians now compose more than 6 percent of the foreign student population in the United States, ranking second only to Taiwan in numbers of students in this country. In 1985–86, there were 23,020 Malaysians enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, according to the Institute of International Education.

On most campuses, Malaysian students are a welcome, but not a well understood population. Professionals in international educational exchange have focused attention on Malaysian students, partly because their sheer numbers warrant it, and partly because their institutions and communities need to know more about this significant group.

This publication is a response to that need. It is an attempt to supply to those who work with Malaysian students essential background and practical information, as current as possible in a rapidly changing situation. The academic and personal characteristics of Malaysian students are in flux, as the Malaysian education system and government policy on exchange continue to evolve. In any case, Malaysian students are now—and will be for the forseeable future—an important part of the educational exchange equation on many of our campuses and in our communities.

Not only foreign student advisers and host families need to know more in order to help Malaysians studying in the United States. Faculty members, housing officers, food service workers, health center staff, and others can find Malaysian students perplexing. This booklet is meant for anyone who wants to know more about Malaysia, its cultures, why and how Malaysians are coming to the United States to study, and how they adjust to life here.

Part I is an introduction to Malaysia, with two articles giving background information. The first, a history of Malaysia and the development of its education system, is by Fatimah Hamid-Don of Ohio University. The second, a concise description of the Malaysian education system today, is by Joann Stedman of Columbia University.

In **Part II** are three chapters describing the parameters of educational exchange between Malaysia and the United States. The first outlines

demographic factors of the population of Malaysian students coming to the United States, and is written by Dr. Marti Thomson of the Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange (MACEE). The second is the text of a policy speech delivered in 1985 by the Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, Tan Sri Dato Haji Othman bin Abdul Malek. The third chapter in this section describes Malaysia's presence in this country via its student departments, and is written by Baharom Othman of the Malaysian Embassy in the United States.

Part III deals with the students themselves. A chapter on the customs and traditions of each of Malaysia's three major ethnic groups is presented by Elaine Noss, formerly director of MACEE. A final chapter by Alan Boyd of Ohio University presents an analysis of Malaysian students' cultural characteristics as they affect the students' adjustment to American campuses and life in the United States.

Part IV contains a selective bibliography and a listing of addresses of Malaysian Student Departments and organizations concerned with Malaysian-American educational exchange.

NAFSA's Malaysia Study Group, which sponsored this publication, is deeply indebted to the authors, who have given generously of their knowledge and their time.

Alan Boyd
Ohio University

Part I
Introduction to Malaysia

Chapter 1

History and Evolution of the Education System

FATIMAH HAMID-DON

The geographical entity comprising the Malay Peninsula, the northern portion of the island of Borneo (Kalimantan), and some of the adjacent islands became federated into the independent state of Malaysia in 1963. Today, Malaysia comprises the Malay States of Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Pahang, Kelantan, Trengganu, Negeri Sembilan, and Johor, the two settlements of Penang and Melaka, and the Borneo states of Sabah and Serawak.

The area has a complex history dating back into the period of the Melaka Sultanate in the fourteenth century and the Brunei Sultanate in the sixteenth century. The Brunei Sultanate, although much older, came under the dominance of Melaka until the fall of Melaka to the Europeans in the sixteenth century, when new Malay states became established on the peninsula and the whole of North Borneo (the territories which are now Sabah and Sarawak) came under the rule of the Sultan of Borneo.

The Portuguese came to the Malay Archipelago in the sixteenth century and occupied Melaka, until they were overthrown by the Dutch. During this time, Acheh in Sumatra, Johor Lama, and Brunei replaced Melaka as the seat of Malay power and served as centres of trade for merchants from Persia, India, China, and the Arabian peninsula. Some of the traders settled in the area and became assimilated with the Malays, bringing with them new customs, religion, and learning. Islam came to the archipelago in the fifteenth century through these traders, among whom were scholars and missionary-teachers. The Malay Sultans embraced the new religion and adopted Islamic titles. Since then, all Malay subjects of the Sultans have become Muslims. Hinduism and Buddhism declined in importance in the Malay states, although some aspects of the culture and traditions, e.g., marriage rituals, installation ceremonies, and house purification ceremo-

Malaysia

SOUTH CHINA SEA
Kota Kinabalu
SABAH
THAILAND
BRUNEI
Penang
Ipoh
Kuantan
Kuala Lumpur
Johor Baharu
STRAITS OF MALACCA
SARAWAK
Kuching
SINGAPORE
INDONESIA
INDONESIA

CHINA
TAIWAN
HONG KONG
VIETNAM
PHILIPPINES
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
AUSTRALIA

nies of Hindus and Buddhists remain and have become assimilated into Malay Islamic culture.

By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the British had arrived in the region through the trading activities of the British East India Company. As British influence in the region grew, the Malay States gradually became protectorates of the British, either as the Federated Malay States (Pahang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan) or the Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis). Together with the colonies of the Straits Settlements (Penang, Melaka, and Singapore), they constituted what was commonly referred to as British Malaya. The Malay States had either British advisers or British residents to assist the Sultans in the administration of their respective states, while the colonies were directly ruled by the Colonial Office.

The economic development brought by the British saw first the opening of gambir and pepper plantations, and later, with concessions provided by the rulers, tin mines and rubber plantations were established throughout the peninsula and the Borneo territories. The rulers had earlier granted concessions to some Chinese miners. The upsurge of economic activity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a steady influx of Chinese mining communities and Indian estate labourers (mostly Tamils from South India) recruited by the British companies to work on the rubber plantations. Between 1911 and 1930, the Chinese population more than doubled in the Malay States and the Straits Settlements. In Sarawak, Chinese labourers were imported to work on the gambir and pepper plantations, while in North Borneo, the Chinese were brought in to work on the tobacco plantations and later, with the opening of rubber estates, in tin mines and urban centres.

The growth of towns and opening up of roads and railways brought other immigrants from South India, Java, Ceylon, Bengal, and Punjab. The educated Indians served as station masters, postal workers, teachers, and the clerical service. The immigrant settlers in the urban centres started businesses, restaurants, and service industries.

The beginning of modern formal education came to the Peninsula and the Borneo States with British rule in the nineteenth century. The colonial administration had a *laissez faire* policy towards education. Each community provided for its own needs and established its own schools, recruited its own teachers, and established its own curricula. The British set up a few schools in the urban centres and encouraged various Christian missionary groups to extend their services to include the setting up of schools in the areas of their activity.

Malay schools were started around 1820 for Malay children, with instruction limited to reading, writing and arithmetic, religious (Koranic) recitations, and traditional rural skills and basic gardening.

Chinese schools were opened in Singapore in 1826, in Sabah in 1872,

and Sarawak in 1874 by the local Chinese communities, which brought in textbooks and teachers from mainland China. Mandarin (Kyo-Yu) was used as the medium of instruction. Reading and writing, the use of abacus, Chinese literature and culture were the focus of the curriculum, tailored for the rigorous examinations required by the Chinese educational system of the time.

Tamil schools came to be established for children of rubber estate workers when the Federated Malay States Labour Ordinance of 1923 incorporated a provision which required the management of rubber estates to build schools for their employees' children. By 1938 there were more than five hundred such schools, three of which were government schools. The curriculum came with the teachers who were recruited from India. Later, a normal class training was started to train these teachers locally.

The first English school was established in 1816 and by 1938 there were over two hundred English schools in the Peninsula. Based on the English public schools system, the curriculum was oriented towards English society. Teachers were originally brought from England as part of the Colonial Service, but as the number of schools grew, teachers were recruited from India, Ceylon, and other British possessions. Normal classes for the training of local teachers were started in 1905.

In addition to the government schools, various Christian missionary bodies—Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist—set up English schools with religion as the motivating spirit. These schools originally established their own standards, including an American pioneer-type curriculum, but later adopted an English-based general education when the Junior, and later the Senior, Cambridge examinations were introduced. Because of the Christian overtones and the agreement of the British Government with the Sultans with regard to religion, Malay children avoided these schools, or if enrolled, were exempted from the religious component in their studies. The missionary schools catered to the Chinese and Indian children with only a sprinkling of Malays. Malay children were mostly in the government schools, which tended to be in the towns, but because of the low concentration of Malays in these centres, the government schools, too, enrolled a majority of Chinese and Tamils.

The Malays, who were mainly subsistence agriculturalists, fisherfolk, and retainers of royal households, remained unaffected by the rapid economic development that was taking place. It was only in the decades preceding the outbreak of World War II that the Malays began to play an active role in the economic arena. Some joined the ranks of estate workers, while others, who had acquired some education, became policemen, office peons, vernacular teachers, and minor administrative officers.

World War II saw a brief suspension of British rule when the Japanese occupied the region. Malay and the Borneo States came under the rule of the Japanese Armed Forces between 1941 and 1945. The Japanese occupation (1941–1945) saw a brief period when the Japanese language and ethos were taught in the *Niponggo Gakko* (Japanese School). Discipline, patriotism, singing the Japanese anthem and patriotic songs and daily allegiance to the symbol of the rising sun, group callisthenics, and work experience featured largely in the curriculum. Some teachers were also retrained to teach the Japanese language in local schools.

After the war, Malaya was restored to the British under a regime called the British Military Administration (B.M.A.). Attempts were made to unify the component states into a unitary state for the return to civilian rule. In 1946, the British Government proposed the formation of a Malayan Union in an attempt to establish colonial rule over the Malay States. The proposal and the manner in which the British authorities secured the concurrence of the Sultans angered the Malays, who by this time were politically awakened, particularly by the events that had occurred in Indonesia. Led by Dato' Onn bin Jaafar, forty-one Malay organizations banded together to register their protests. The coalition formed was known as the *Kongres Melayu SeMalaya*, which later developed into the United Malay National Organization or UMNO, the organization that spearheaded the Independence of Malaya movement.

Due to differences in strategy towards the attainment of this objective, Dato' Onn resigned as leader of UMNO to lead the Independence of Malaya Party. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, who took over the leadership of UMNO, sought support by forming a coalition with other ethnic political groups. The Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed in 1949 and by March 1953, the UMNO-MCA coalition was extended nationwide. On the eve of the first federal elections in 1955, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) joined forces into what came to be known as the Alliance Party. Tunku Abdul Rahman became the first elected Chief Minister of the Malayan Federation.

Independence came to Malaya on August 31, 1957. The earlier federation had not been free from internal threats; there were four attempts at secession by Penang between 1948 and 1949 and again between 1953 and 1957, and by Johor and Kelantan separately between 1955 and 1956. Only after much compromise, accommodation, and persuasion was the new Federation agreed to. The main issues were the rights to British citizenship of the Straits-born Chinese, the personal power and standing of the Sultans, concern over the diminishing Malay supremacy, the Islamic religion, the Malay language and customs, and last but not least, the communist movement to liberate Malaya from British imperialism. After independence, it was left to

the Federation Government to work towards a solution to these matters and to foster a sense of nationhood through ethnic integration and a common identity as Malayans.

By this time the independent status of other British colonies had become imminent. In 1962, the Cobbold Commission was appointed to make recommendations on the proposed federation. A detailed and exhaustive inquiry was conducted, and over 2,200 written submissions from individuals, boards, unions, religious groups, and political and native leaders were studied. The difficult task of detailing the constitutional arrangements and ensuring the safeguarding of territorial rights and special interests was entrusted to an Inter-governmental Committee, comprising Britain, Malaya, North Borneo, and Sarawak under the chairmanship of the British Minister for Colonial Affairs.

The outcome was the London agreement of July 9, 1963. Malaysia was formally formed in September of the same year with the states of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak. Brunei decided to remain outside the Federation. Malaysia was initially opposed by both the Philippines and Indonesia. The Philippine opposition stemmed mainly from the unresolved question of its claim over parts of the Sulu Kingdom in North Borneo, while the Indonesian opposition had its basis in ideological, economic, and political factors. Relations between these countries and Malaysia were not established until 1966 with the signing of a Peace Agreement between Indonesia's Adam Malik and Malaysia's Abdul Razak in Bangkok, following which the Philippines began formal recognition of Malaysia. During these same years, the government undertook the progressive implementation of the Razak Education Policy and the recommendations of the Rahman Talib Review of 1960. The main objective of both policy documents was to unite the children of all ethnic groups under one educational system, using in gradual stages, the National Language (Bahasa Kebangsaan) as the medium of instruction, and pursuing a common curriculum plan irrespective of the prevailing medium of instruction. Safeguards were conscientiously taken to ensure that standards were maintained. For this reason the English schools functioned much as they had before, except with the introduction of Bahasa as a compulsory subject. The English schools served also as a primary source for the supply of future teachers.

A systematic programme of "Malayanization" was set into motion. Malayan teacher education was stepped up, including sending prospective Malayan teachers to two and later three Malayan Teachers Colleges in the United Kingdom. Teaching bursaries were granted to university students with a view to expand the educational service and, when more qualified Malayans emerged, to replace the "expatriate" education officers and teachers. Various committees were set up to review existing syllabi and to formulate a Malayan-orientation to these

syllabi for use in all schools. To ensure that standards were maintained, these curricula were submitted for approval to the Cambridge Examinations Syndicate in the United Kingdom so that the Malayan public examination would have equivalences to the British certification system. In this way, Malayan students might not be jeopardized when seeking admission into British and Commonwealth universities.

The *Rukunegara*, a statement of national ideology formulated in the early 1970s, brought new emphases into the development of the national educational system. Where earlier efforts had emphasized readiness and gradual progression, the current phase stressed commitment and meeting planned targets. The key focus was on national unity as Malaysians. The *Rukunegara* reads:

> "Our Nation, Malaysia, is dedicated
> To achieving a greater Unity for all her peoples;
> To maintaining a democratic way of life;
> To creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably distributed;
> To ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions;
> To building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology.

We, her peoples, pledge our united efforts to attain these ends, guided by these principles:

> BELIEF IN GOD
> LOYALTY TO KING AND COUNTRY
> UPHOLDING THE CONSTITUTION AND
> THE RULE OF LAW
> GOOD BEHAVIOR AND MORALITY

The educational objectives of the Second Malaysia Plan (1970–1975) focussed on "promoting national integration and unity." The measures to be taken were identified and later reiterated and refined in the Third Malaysia Plan (1976–1980). Accordingly, the objectives of education and training under the Third Malaysia Plan are stated as follows:

1. To strengthen the educational system for national integration and unity through

(a) continued implementation, in stages, of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction at all levels;

(b) the development of personality, character, and good citizenship, and the promotion of moral discipline through curricular and extra-curricular activities;

(c) narrowing the gap in educational opportunities between rich and poor, and among the various regions and races in the country, through a more equitable distribution of resources and facilities;

(d) the eventual integration of the educational system in Sabah and Sarawak into the national system.

2. The orientation and expansion of education and training towards meeting manpower needs, especially in science and technology.

3. The improvement of the quality of education in order to reduce waste and increase its effectiveness for nation building.

4. The expansion of the research, planning, and implementation capacity to meet the above objectives.

The '70s and '80s have been marked by a period of consolidation and expansion of the national education system. Consolidation involves a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities. Even though nine-year universal education was introduced as early as 1965, it became clear in 1970 that many had failed to avail themselves of this opportunity. Measures therefore had to be taken to redress the problem. These measures included setting up residential schools for the lower secondary classes, MARA Junior Colleges and Secondary Schools, implementing the textbook loan scheme, financial aid and nutrition programmes, and school bussing. As a result of the expansion of facilities and teacher training programmes, the elementary enrollment increased by over fourteen percent in the Peninsular states, and by over twenty-five percent in both Sabah and Sarawak. At the lower secondary level the increases were even more dramatic.

Expansion in the tertiary and higher education levels saw the establishment of four new universities, all in response to the manpower needs projected in the Development Plans. Within a half decade of their establishment, the universities registered phenomenal increases in enrollment.

Throughout the decade of the '70s, policy and decision makers did not lose sight of the overriding objectives of the education system; that is, the attainment of national unity among the various ethnic communities. In concert with the New Economic Policy which aimed at eradicating poverty and redressing economic imbalances among ethnic groups and regions to bring about a restructuring of the Malaysian society, the national education system had a goal to bring about socio-economic mobility through training in manpower skills and needs.

To reduce ethnic imbalances in tertiary educational opportunities in the local universities, a quota system, reflecting the population ethnic ratio, was introduced. *Bumiputra* candidates were accorded priority status for admissions. The effect of this measure was a growing number of non-*Bumiputra* students seeking admission in overseas universities. Today, it is estimated that over fifty thousand Malaysian students are enrolled overseas in any given year. About fifty percent of

these students are government sponsored, while the rest are either self-financed or sponsored by private organizations.

The dawn of the '80s promised a number of significant changes in the national education system. The Cabinet Committee Report of 1979 on the review of the implementation of the Educational Policy made several recommendations, which, when implemented, would strengthen the present system. Among the recommendations were:

1. the diversification of secondary education towards a vocational bias;
2. the study of a third language in addition to English;
3. the more effective teaching and learning of English;
4. curriculum changes emphasizing the basics at the elementary level; and
5. a more up-to-date programme of studies at the secondary level to include business studies, computer utilization, entrepreneurship, and technological subjects.

The development of higher education geared to manpower needs is crucial in a country like Malaysia which is undergoing rapid industrialization. Many new courses and degree programmes have been introduced in the universities and polytechnics, and the enrollment of Malaysians in universities overseas trebled the numbers in the local institutions. The emphasis is on science and technological skills and human resource development.

Be that as it may, the decision makers are not oblivious to the fact that a less than humanistic approach to the problem could endanger human dignity and freedom. The '80s have also witnessed a renewal of emphasis on moral and religious education, the stress on human ethics, and most important of all, the priority placed on peace and prosperity of all mankind.

Chapter 2

The Education System Today

JOANN STEDMAN

The national stream of the Malaysian education system is patterned after the British system. There are eleven years of primary/secondary school, two years of pre-university and three-, four- and five-year bachelor degree programs. Education, to date, is not compulsory. Continuation in the system is based on continuous assessment through standardized examinations at various levels. The school year runs from January to November. (Chart on the next page compares the American and Malaysian systems.)

Primary School

Primary school is six years in length and referred to as Standards One through Six. Children usually enter at age six. Although Bahasa Malaysia is the official language of instruction, during Standards One through Six, children can study in Malay, Tamil, or Chinese. By the end of Standard Six, children must be fluent in Malay as all children in other language streams generally enter the national stream. If not fluent in Bahasa Malaysia, children must take an extra year, called the "remove year," in which emphasis is given to the language as well as other Standard Six subjects.

The curriculum in primary school is a standardized required curriculum. English is required as a second language. Other subjects include art, civics, geography, health, history, local studies, mathematics, physical education, religion (Islam), and science. Promotion is automatic, but there is a standardized assessment at the end of Standard Five which measures overall achievement. This test is sometimes used to identify gifted children who are put in special residential schools for an enriched curriculum.

CHART

Comparison of American and
Malaysian Educational Progression

AMERICAN	Year in School	MALAYSIAN		
	20			
Graduate and Professional	19 18 17	Graduate and some honors programs		
BACHELOR'S DEGREE				
(Senior)	16	University Year 3		
(Junior)	15	University Year 2		
Undergraduate				Diploma
(Sophomore)	14	University Year 1	Year 3	
		STPM		
(Freshman)	13	Upper Six	Year 2	
High School	12	Lower Six	Year 1	
				SPM
	11	Form 5		
	10	Form 4		
Secondary				SRP
	9	Form 3		
Junior High	8	Form 2		
	7	Form 1		
	6			
	5			
	4			
Elementary	3	Primary		
	2			
	1			

Secondary School

1. National Stream

Secondary school in the national system is divided into two parts—lower secondary which is made up of Forms I, II, and III and upper secondary which comprises Forms IV and V.

Lower Secondary

During Forms I, II, and III, the students follow a standardized curriculum of general education, which includes courses in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language), English, geography, history, integrated science, and modern mathematics. At this level, there is also an opportunity to study one vocational subject such as agriculture, commerce, domestic science or industrial arts. At the end of Form III, students take an examination and if successful, receive the Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP)/Lower Certificate of Education.

Upper Secondary

A select number of students who receive satisfactory scores on the SRP go on to Upper Secondary School (Form IV). The course is divided into academic or vocational streams, with the academic stream further subdivided into tracks for arts, science, and technical subjects. The upper secondary course is two years in length and at the end of Form V, the students sit for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)/Malaysian Certificate of Education examination. These examinations are patterned after the G.C.E. Ordinary level examinations but are administered by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate.

The academic stream includes classes in additional mathematics, agricultural science, Bahasa Malaysia, commerce, English, general science, geography, history, mathematics, principles of accounts, and pure science. The technical stream includes most of the academic track courses, but has options in building construction, commerce, engineering workshop, geometrical and building drawing, geometrical and mechanical drawing, surveying.

During the eleventh year of school, students sit for mock examinations. These are similar to the SPM examinations and have a high reliability for predicting success on the official SPM examinations. In fact, the initial selection for overseas scholarships is based on the mock examination results, which become available in January, while the official SPM results are not available until April.

Students sit for at least six, and not more than eight, subject examinations for the SPM. To receive the SPM, they must take Bahasa

Malaysia and English and must pass Bahasa Malaysia with at least a grade of eight. The SPM is graded as follows: 1 and 2 = Distinction; 3 through 6 = Credit; 7 and 8 = Pass; 9 = Fail.

Certificates are given classifications according to grades received on the examinations. Aggregate scores for the best six examinations (including Bahasa Malaysia) are categorized as follows: up to an aggregate of 24 = Division or Grade I; up to 36 = Division or Grade II; up to 45 = Division or Grade III.

According to the scores received on the SPM examination, students are selected to go on to the pre-university course (Upper and Lower Form VI) or individual university Matriculation programs. Students who are not selected for pre-university study go on to various government and privately sponsored vocational schools.

2. Junior Science Colleges

The Junior Science Colleges are special residential secondary schools (Forms I–V) sponsored by the Ministry of Education and by MARA (Majlis Amanah Ra'ayat/Council of Trust for Indigenous People). They are schools for gifted and talented Bumiputra (Malay and other indigenous people) students aged 11 to 16 from low socio-economic or rural areas of the country, who would normally not have access to the type of educational facilities or the enrichment programs or the guidance that the Junior Science Colleges can provide. The program is residential and students must live on the campus.

The curriculum of the Junior Science College is geared toward preparing students for further education. It is the same as that taught in the regular secondary school program, but students get more individualized attention and assistance with their studies if it is needed. The course of study is five years in length and the students must enter at the first level; however, consideration is being given to intake of students at Form IV in the future.

The grading scale for the Junior Science College and the certificate earned at the end of the program is the same as that earned in other upper secondary school programs. Most students from the Junior Science Colleges go directly on to university study in the United States or to MARA Institute of Technology (Institut Teknologi MARA), with a small number going directly to the Matriculation and Pre-university programs.

3. Vocational Secondary Schools

Students who choose not to proceed to upper secondary schools or whose results on the SRP are not sufficient to continue may go to a

secondary vocational school. Students study for two years and take general education courses plus at least one course in agriculture, commerce, domestic or industrial science, engineering, or trade. The courses culminate in an examination called the Sijil Pelajaran Vokesynal Malaysia (SPVM)/Malaysian Certificate of Vocational Education. Grading for the SPVM is the same as for the SPM.

4. Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools

Students fluent in Chinese may choose not to enter the national stream of education at the end of Standard Six, but rather continue their studies in a private school which is part of the Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary School (MICSS) system. This group of sixty independent schools is the largest group of private secondary schools in Malaysia.

The MICSS course is six years in length. It is divided into two parts, each three years in length, called Junior Middle School and Senior Middle School. The language of instruction is Chinese, but the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, and English are required subjects. The curriculum is based on the prescribed syllabi formulated by the Malaysian Government for all secondary schools.

At the end of the twelfth year, students sit for the Unified Examination. Twelve subjects are offered and students may sit for a maximum of ten examinations. The subjects offered are: advanced mathematics, Bahasa Malaysia, biology, bookkeeping, chemistry, Chinese, commerce, elementary mathematics, English, geography, history, and physics. The grading system is: 1 and 2 = Distinction; 3 through 6 = Credit; 7 and 8 = Pass; 9 = Fail. Aggregate scores are calculated on the basis of the five best examination results. The best aggregate is five and the maximum aggregate to pass is forty.

Students who complete the MICSS Unified Examination continue their education in other countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Students from the MICSS may also sit for the national examinations to enter government sponsored universities and technical schools.

Pre-university Education

1. Form VI

A select number of students may go on to the two-year, pre-university course called Form VI. It is divided into Upper and Lower Form

VI and is patterned after the GCE Advanced Level examinations. Students study four academic subjects plus prepare a general paper. After two years, they may take examinations in the academic subjects at either the principal (Advanced) or the subsidiary (Ordinary) level. Successful students receive the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM)/Malaysian Higher School Certificate, formerly called the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan (STP)/Higher School Certificate, which, since 1982, has been administered in the national language by the Malaysian Examinations Council.

Successful STPM holders may be considered for entrance to one of Malaysia's seven universities. The minimum entrance requirement for most of the universities is two principal passes and one subsidiary pass on the STPM. Passing grades on the STPM principal subjects are: A, B, C, D, E, while F is passing at the Subsidiary level. Grades on the General Paper are: 1 through 6, Pass; 7 through 9, Fail.

2. Matriculation Courses

An alternative to the normal Higher School course (Upper and Lower Form VI) is a special course designed by some of the universities called a Matriculation course. Bumiputra (indigenous Malay) students who are enrolled in Junior Science Colleges and other secondary schools and whose SPM results did not qualify them for Form VI are selectively admitted to this preparatory course at particular universities. The students take an intensive one or two year course, depending on their major, similar to the Higher School Course. At the end of the program, examinations are administered by the sponsoring university, and successful students enter that university for the degree program. In some instances, unsuccessful students may repeat the course and the examinations.

University Education

There are seven universities in Malaysia, all authorized by the Ministry of Education to offer degrees. Until recently, university courses, examinations, and grading practices followed closely those patterns seen in British universities. Recently, however, all of the universities have converted to the semester calendar and some of them offer grade systems more like those seen in the United States.

1. The first university established in Malaysia was the Universiti Malaya (UM)/University of Malaya. Located in Kuala Lumpur, it was founded in 1959 as a branch of the University of Malaya in Singapore, but became an independent institution in 1962. Since 1983, Malay has

been the official language of instruction. Courses are offered for undergraduate and graduate degrees in the Faculties of Arts and Social Science, Dentistry, Economics and Administration, Education, Engineering, Islamic Law, Islamic Theology, Law, Medicine, and Science. Diploma courses are offered in education, public administration, business administration, advanced translation, international interpretation, English as a second language, accounting, computer science, conference interpretation and translation. The university intends to level its undergraduate population at approximately 8000 students and expand its postgraduate courses.

2. The second university established in Malaysia was the Universiti Kabangsaan Malaysia (UKM)/National University of Malaysia. It was founded in 1970 and opened a branch campus in Sabah in 1974. Graduate and undergraduate degree courses are offered in the Faculties of Biological Science, Business Management, Economics, Education, Islamic Studies, Medicine, Physical and Applied Science, Social Science and Humanities, and through the Institute of Malay Language, Literature and Culture, Center for Post Graduate Studies, and the Center for Quantitative Studies.

3. The Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)/University of Technology Malaysia began as a technical school for the public works department in 1925 and has progressed through several stages of development over the last six decades. In 1930, it became a training center for technical assistants for a variety of government technical departments. After World War II, it was called the Technical College and in 1955, the National Institute of Technology. It became the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in 1972 and offers diploma and undergraduate degree courses, mostly in technical fields. The main campus is located in Kuala Lumpur, but there are plans to move to Johor Baharu in the near future. Faculties include Built Environment, Chemical Engineering and Natural Resources, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Surveying. Liberal studies courses are offered through the Centers of Humanities Studies and Science Studies. Three-year diploma courses are offered in chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical, and petroleum engineering and architecture, computer science, land surveying, property management, quantitative surveying, science with education, urban and regional planning and valuation. The university is unique in Malaysia in that it accepts all of its students after the SPM to do either terminal diploma courses, integrated degree courses (in which a diploma is completed and selected students are allowed to go on for two more years to complete degree studies) or five-year degree courses. Graduate degree programs are not offered at this time.

4. The Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM)/University of Agriculture Malaysia was established in 1971 when the Faculty of Agriculture

of the University of Malaya merged with the College of Agriculture, an institution which was established in 1931 and was previously known as the School of Agriculture. It offers diploma and degree courses in the Faculties of Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Educational Services, Forestry, Resource Economics and Agribusiness, Sciences and Environmental Studies, and Veterinary Medicine and Animal Studies. Plans for expansion include the development of Faculties of Fisheries and Home and Food Technology, as well as elevating the branch campus in Sarawak to degree granting status.

Three-year diploma courses are offered at UPM in agriculture, agricultural engineering, computer science, human development, science, fisheries, forestry, and science with education. A seven semester diploma is offered in animal health and production. While the UPM requires the STPM for entrance to degree courses, it has a Matriculation program for Bumiputra students and selected diploma students may be allowed to stay on at the university for degree courses, entering with exemptions for the first year of the bachelor's degree. The University also has an active program in Extension and Continuing Education.

5. The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)/University of Science Malaysia opened for classes in 1969 and was officially established as a university in 1971. Located in Penang, in the northern part of the country, USM offers degree courses in the Schools of Applied Science, Biological Science, Chemical Science, Educational Studies, Housing, Building and Planning, Humanities, Medicine, Physics and Mathematical Sciences, Pharmaceutical Science and Social Science. Plans for expansion include Schools of Communication, Computer Science, and Management as well as a sub-campus in Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, for the School of Medical Science.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia also conducts "off campus" courses leading to the BA hons., BSc hons., and BSocSci hons. Students may study at home for the first five years using tests, tapes, and synopses of lectures. Study centers have been established in various locations to enable lecturers to meet with off-campus students for tutorials and science practicals. Three weeks of required seminars and lectures are held on campus each November. During the final year, students must attend regular full-time courses.

6. The Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIA)/International Islamic University, established in 1983, is the only private university in Malaysia. However, it does receive funds from the Malaysian government for operation. It is cooperatively funded by several Islamic nations and offers degree programs through the Faculties of Law and Economics.

7. The Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)/University of Northern Malaysia was established in 1984 in the state of Kedah. The first class began in 1984 and is expected to graduate in 1988 from the School of

Economics and Public Administration or the School of Management and Accountancy.

Entrance requirements to Malaysian universities vary. Applications for most of the universities are processed by the Unit Pusat Universiti-universiti (UPU)/Central Admissions Unit of the Ministry of Education. The grading practices have followed the British pattern and degrees have been classified into First Class, Second Class-Upper, Second Class-Lower, and Third Class or Pass degrees. Because of recent changes in the calendar and the adoption of A through F grading systems, changes in the degree classification system may also occur.

Other Post-secondary Education

Two major alternatives to pre-university education are teacher training and technical and vocational diploma programs.

1. Teacher Training

Preparation for primary and secondary school teachers is conducted in the twenty-seven teacher training colleges located in peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. The SPM with six passes (at least three of which must be at the Credit level) is required as a minimum for entrance. Students with the STPM may also be considered. They follow the same course as those holding the SPM but receive higher salaries upon entrance to the teaching profession.

The teacher training colleges prepare students to teach in Primary School, Standards One through Six, and Lower Secondary, Forms I through III. (Teachers for grades above Form III must have a university degree and a post-graduate Diploma in Education.) The course was two years in length, changed to three years, and is currently two and one-half years in length. During the first half, all teachers take the same preparation. The second half varies, depending on the student's intended major, and periods of supervised student teaching are interspersed throughout. At the end of the course, if successful on coursework and examinations, students are awarded a Sijil Perguruan or Sijil Guru (Teaching Certificate). In January 1985, the schools began to operate on a semester system.

Several Specialist Teacher Training Colleges offer courses in vocational subjects, the arts, and techniques for teaching handicapped children, among other subjects. A teacher shortage in Malaysia necessitates the hiring of emergency teachers who teach and receive their training simultaneously during vacation periods at the Teacher Training Colleges.

2. Technical and Vocational Education

Students who do not enter the pre-university courses may continue their studies at various vocational and technical schools. The most well-developed and perhaps most widely recognized of these institutions is Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM)/MARA Institute of Technology. ITM offers more than eighty diploma courses of varying lengths. The majority of the diploma courses are three years, while advanced diploma courses are two years in length. The entrance requirement will vary with the diploma course, but is usually the SPM or its equivalent. Many students who complete diplomas in business, engineering technology, and selected other fields, transfer to degree programs in the United States with up to two years of transfer credit. Some Advanced Diploma courses have been considered as the basis of admission to some U.S. graduate schools.

Ohio University offers a bachelor's degree in business administration to selected ITM Diploma in Business holders. Their faculty teaches two additional years of Ohio University course work in Malaysia to assist selected students in completing their degree requirements. In addition, Ohio University in Malaysia also offers an Executive Master's in Business Administration (EMBA).

ITM hopes to develop more joint programs with U.S. universities which could result in degrees being offered in Malaysia. They have recently established programs with three U.S. universities or university consortiums which offer undergraduate, lower-division courses in ITM facilities in Malaysia in preparation for transfer to other U.S. institutions. The courses are taught by faculty from the contracting U.S. institution and offered for credit of that institution. As of 1986, contracts were held with the University of Maryland, University of Texas, State University of New York at Buffalo, and with the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Affairs (MUCIA).

Another government supported post-secondary institution offering diploma courses is Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR)/Tunku Abdul Rahman College. TAR Kolej provides training primarily in engineering technology. In an arrangement with Campbell University, Buis Creek, N.C., Diploma in Science candidates may also be awarded a bachelor's degree from Campbell without a residence requirement.

Technical certificates (27 months) and a few three or four year diplomas are offered at seven politechnic institutes, of which the oldest are Ungku Omar Politeknik/Ungku Omar Politechnic and Kuantan Politeknik/Kuantan Politechnic. The entrance requirements vary depending on the program.

Institutions offering U.S.-patterned courses intended for transfer to the United States are Maktab Sains MARA (sometimes called MARA Community College), Kolej Damansara Utama (College Damansara),

and Petaling Jaya (PJ) Community College. Some of these institutions have worked closely with U.S. community colleges to develop courses similar to those offered at the freshman and sophomore levels in U.S. schools. They have been developed with the idea that continuation of study after these courses would be done in the United States, as graduates of these schools cannot enter Malaysian universities or use the work as a basis for seeking employment. While these programs are not recognized by the Malaysian government and not accredited in the United States, the development of the programs in some cases has been carefully monitored by the U.S. school which has helped them develop their curriculum.

Among the many private schools offering post-secondary education are the Institut Teknoloji Federal/Federal Institute of Technology, Institut Teknoloji Jaya/Institute Technology Jaya, and Kolej Damansara Utama/ College Damansara Utama. Students at these schools are prepared to sit for various British qualifications.

Two other independent schools with post-secondary options are Ganella College and Taylors College, both offering preparation for the South Australian Matriculation Examination. Ganella College also offers courses in preparation for various British qualifications, and Taylors offers preparation for the Ontario secondary school Honor Graduation Diploma.

The above list is not all-inclusive. Educational institutions are developing very rapidly, growing, changing, and expanding at a rate which is difficult to monitor from overseas. Inquiries about new institutions may be directed to the Malaysian-American Commission for Educational Exchange in Kuala Lumpur.

Part II
Study in the United States: Trends and Policies

Chapter 3

Profile of Malaysian Students Entering U. S. Educational Institutions: 1985

MARTI THOMSON

An Overview

After several years of tremendous growth, the number of new Malaysian students entering U.S. educational institutions has begun to level off. In 1985, 6,419 student visas were issued by the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, a decrease of 9 percent over the previous year. A survey by the Institute of International Education (IIE) showed that as of September 1985 there were 343,777 foreign students in the United States. Malaysia, with 23,020 students, ranked second among all nations.

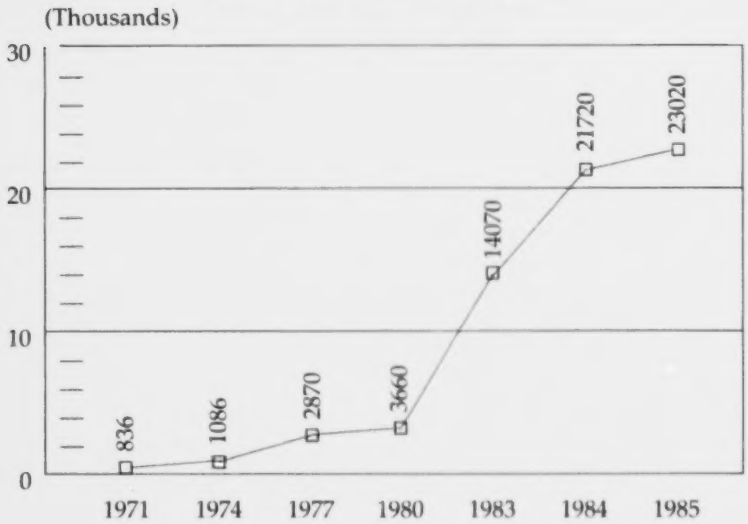
The gradual reduction in the number of students entering U.S. institutions is attributed primarily to a Malaysian government policy instituted in June 1985 whereby sponsored students spend the first two years of the B.A. program within Malaysia. Under this policy, SPM (Malaysian Certificate of Education) scholarship students will be completing an Associate Degree in Malaysia through one of the American university linkage programs. Considering the large number of students enrolled in these local programs, the 9 percent decrease is a relatively modest one.

The figures used in the preparation of this report were obtained from the "Personal Data Sheets" returned to the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur by students who had applied for F-1, J-1, and M-1 visas. In 1985, 88 percent of the students who were issued visas completed the "Personal Data Sheet." Also included among the statistics are the 214 Malaysian students who were issued visas in either Singapore or Brunei.

Of the 5,832 students surveyed, 5,218 or 89.5 percent entered four-year colleges or universities, while 287 (4.9 percent) enrolled in two-year junior or community colleges. Of the remainder, 72 (1.2 percent)

CHART I

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN U.S.



entered primary and secondary schools, 22 (0.4 percent) entered trade and technical schools, while 83 students (1.4 percent) went to the United States for short-term training, post-doctorate research, or as visiting lecturers, etc. A total of 150 (2.6 percent) students entered private English language institutes. However, other students studied Intensive English at their U.S. university prior to beginning their academic work.

Level of Study

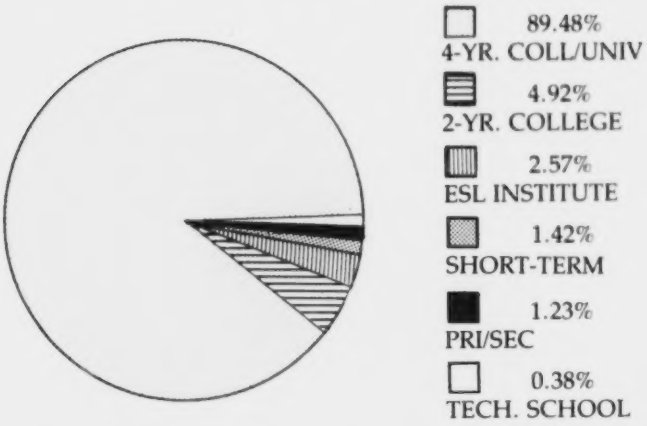
The majority of students going to the United States continues to be undergraduates seeking a bachelor's degree. Of the 5,655 university level students, 4,793 are undergraduates (85 percent), while 862 (15 percent) are graduate students. Of the undergraduates, about 21 percent are transfer students who will enter the second or third year. The largest number of transfer students come from the Institute Technology MARA/ITM (41 percent), Maktab Sains MARA/MSM Kuantan (17 percent), and Kolej Damansara Utama/KDU (6.6 percent).

Where Students Are Enrolling

Formerly, students were concentrated in a few "popular" universities. Now they are enrolling in many more institutions all over the

CHART II

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS



United States. The 5,505 university and college students entered a total of 608 different institutions, of which 505 were four-year and 103 were two-year colleges. This represents 20 percent of the 3,100 accredited American colleges and universities, a 19 percent increase over 1984.

Although the situation is improving, there is still a tendency for Malaysian students to concentrate in just a few institutions. In 1984, for example, 29 percent of the students entered just twelve institutions while the figures for 1985 declined slightly to 21 percent. Of the 1985 entrants, 57 percent were government-sponsored while 43% were private students, indicating more of a tendency for government-sponsored students to cluster than private students. The government-sponsored students were enrolled in 325 institutions (up 25 percent) while private students entered 510 different colleges (up 19 percent).

There has also been a marked decrease in government-sponsored students enrolling at the five most "popular" universities. For example, the figures for this group went from a high of 80 percent in 1983, to 50 percent in 1984, and decreased further to 46 percent in 1985.

With regard to geographic distribution, 54 percent of the students were enrolled in schools located in only ten of the fifty states. California remains the most popular state, attracting 679 new students, followed by Illinois (446), Ohio (404), Louisiana (283), Indiana (267), Iowa (255), Texas (200), New York (200), Michigan (200), and Pennsylvania (198), according to IIE unpublished statistics.

Some concern has been expressed regarding the quality of institutions in which Malaysian students are enrolling. Although the competitiveness of admissions is not an absolute indicator of quality, it can serve as a guide. In 1985, 12 percent of the Malaysian university students entered 107 of the 200 more selective colleges and universities, a decrease from 13 percent in 1984. Of these students, 54 percent were government-sponsored. Note, however, that 83 percent of all students enrolled in a competitive, or better, university. Among government-sponsored students, 85 percent entered schools in these categories, in contrast to 80 percent for private students.

Finally, of the 505 different four-year colleges and universities where Malaysian students are enrolled, 50 percent of these are state (or public controlled), while 50 percent are private schools.

Field of Study

The distribution of Malaysian students by field of study is illustrated in Table I. The most popular areas continue to be business, engineering, and computer science, with these three accounting for 75 percent of all students enrolled. Business administration or management programs attracted 37 percent of all students, followed by engineering with 30 percent and computer science 8 percent. This strong focus magnifies the effect of large numbers of Malaysian students on certain campuses by further concentrating them within the university itself.

Financial Support

In 1985, the Malaysian government and its related agencies sponsored 3,255 or 56 percent of all students. With regard to the private students, 224 (4 percent) received scholarships from U.S. universities or international agencies, with 36 percent of these scholarships being awarded to undergraduates, 41 percent to graduate students, and 23 percent to post-graduates.

Student Background

Geographically, the largest number of students listed their Malaysian home state as the Federal Territory or Selangor (34 percent), followed by Johor (11 percent), Perak (9 percent), and Penang (7 percent). Sarawak (3.5 percent) and Perlis (1.0 percent) had the smallest number of students.

Ethnic composition for the total group was estimated to be about 58 percent Malay, 36 percent Chinese, 3 percent Indian, with the remaining 2 percent from other ethnic groups.

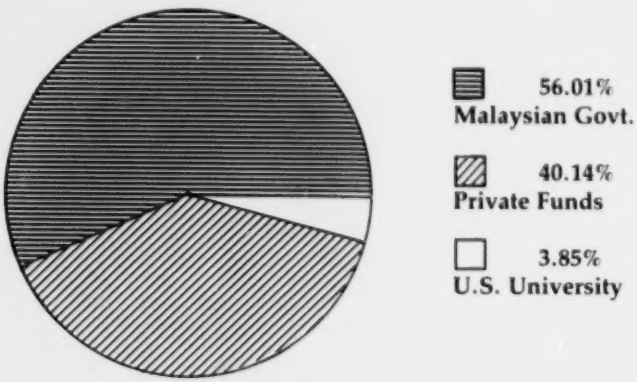
TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION BY FIELD OF STUDY—1985

Field of Study		No. of Students	Percentage
Business Fields		2117	37.4%
Business Administration	2003		
Accounting/Finance	54		
Public Administration	56		
Actuarial Science	4		
Engineering		1715	30.3%
Computer Science		440	7.8%
Education/TESL/Counseling		216	3.8%
Social Sciences		215	3.8%
Architecture		187	3.3%
Physical Science		114	2.0%
Mathematics/Statistics		103	1.8%
Agriculture/Forestry/Food Science/ Landscape Architecture		85	1.5%
Fine Arts		75	1.3%
Liberal Arts/Sciences		57	1.0%
Urban Planning		49	0.9%
Biological Sciences		74	1.3%
Allied Health Fields and Medicine		28	0.5%
Journalism/Mass Communications		49	0.9%
Religion		23	0.4%
Industrial Technology		18	.3%
Hotel Management/Tourism		14	.3%
Undeclared		76	1.3%
TOTAL		5655	99.9%

CHART III

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS' SOURCES OF SUPPORT



Chapter 4

Malaysia's Overseas Education Policy

TAN SRI DATO HAJI OTHMAN BIN ABDUL MALEK

A policy speech presented by the Secretary-General, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, at the Seminar on the Future Placement Policy of Malaysian Students in the United States of America, on June 3, 1985, Washington, D.C.

As a developing country of multi-racial society, Malaysia's national objectives, especially for the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, have been to strive for national unity. One of the many strategies towards achieving this national unity has been the development of a socio-economic foundation that would provide for a viable and equitable participation of all races in the development process. Such a framework has been enunciated in the New Economic Policy which committed the country to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of races; and to accelerate the process of restructuring the society so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of races with economic functions. It was recognised that such a process of transformation of the Malaysian society has to be achieved within the context of an expanding economy so that no particular group would experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation.

It is within this framework that Malaysia has, since Independence, given the highest priority for the expansion of facilities at all levels of education, especially in tertiary education. Within the context for gearing tertiary education to manpower requirements and to meet the skilled manpower needs of the nation, the government placed special emphasis for education in science, professional, and technological fields. Expansion programs continued unabated as enrollment at all levels of education rose—in primary, secondary, technical and vocational education, and teacher training.

Local facilities in higher education have expanded rapidly in recent years. From a modest beginning in 1959, when the first university, that is the University of Malaya, was established, the country now has seven universities, the youngest being the Northern University of Malaysia established in 1983. However, this expansion could not fully meet the ever increasing demand for tertiary education. As such, notwithstanding the national efforts to provide education at home, the government has continued to look abroad in sending students, especially for courses not available locally or in courses where there are not enough places for all. Due to increased demand for training personnel at all levels, the tempo of obtaining education overseas was stepped up in the late 1960s especially in the light of achieving the goal of the New Economic Policy. This is because the constraints in resources to further develop the universities, especially the teaching personnel in professional and technological fields, restricted the student intake into the universities.

It has been the traditional pattern that Malaysian students seek their tertiary education in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand before avenues for study were opened in the United States. The breakthrough began in the early 1970s when the Malaysian government sent serving officers for a post-graduate program in the University of Pittsburgh. Later, with the initiatives taken by MARA as one of the main sponsoring agencies, the MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) began undergraduate programs with Ohio University.

As the figures that I am about to quote indicate, it may be true to say that Malaysian students constitute the fastest increasing group of foreign students in the United States today. As at the beginning of 1978, about 3,000 students had enrolled in a number of institutions in the United States. However, with the acceptance of SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)/MCE (Malaysia Certificate of Education) as an entry requirement plus, of course, TOEFL, by more universities in the United States then, the figure went up by nearly six times to 18,058 students in 1981/1982; and by 1984/1985 the figures rose steadily to 24,000 students. About 14,000 of these students are government-sponsored and they are in the various disciplines oriented towards our needs, such as management, business administration, the basic sciences of physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, engineering, and computer science. According to our records, these students are currently studying in about 450 universities, colleges, and schools throughout the country.

Prior to 1983, the students who were specially selected by the various government sponsoring agencies after they had completed eleven years of education and passed the national examination at that level, were immediately sent abroad to undergo pre-university courses, such as the intensive English language course in the United States, the

G.C.E. 'A' Level in the United Kingdom; the Australian Matriculation; Form 6 and Form 7 in New Zealand and Grade 13 in Canada. However, in the light of experience in sending students at a very young age immediately after SPM in the earlier years, which has resulted in certain negative effects, the government decided that a more systematic six-month preparatory program should be carried out locally for sponsored students who have been selected to pursue their studies overseas. The main objectives of the pre-departure program were as follows:

1. To ensure that the national scholarship recipients for undergraduate study overseas will have requisite language proficiency and in this case, for those earmarked for the United States, satisfactory attainment in their TOEFL scores;

2. To equip the students with the necessary knowledge on national ideology, Islamic religion, the culture and way of life of the receiving countries and the subculture of the university campus by instilling positive values so as to avoid cultural shocks and so that the students may function fully within the receiving countries while maintaining their sense of identity.

It was, however, discovered later that the intensive English language preparation for a period of six months with the purpose of only to sit for the required English language tests was not sufficient. It was felt that the students should have the language proficiency not only to pass the required tests and qualify themselves for admissions into universities overseas, but what was more important, to master the language so that they would achieve the level of proficiency which enables them to pursue and complete their studies successfully. Furthermore, the expenditure of financing a large number of sponsored students, especially in hard currency terms, as well as the difficulty of placing them in appropriate overseas institutions, led the government to consider alternative approaches for fulfilling its goal of sending a large number of students abroad. Thus, a two-year preparatory program was designed and duly implemented at the beginning of this year.

From 1985 onwards, for the government-sponsored students who will be selected to pursue their studies in the United States, a two-year undergraduate program has been developed to provide these students with courses that will prepare them for admission as transfer students to United States institutions. Under this program, which is a joint-venture involving the MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) and the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, Inc. (MUCIA), courses will be offered at a special center in Malaysia—the ITM/MUCIA Center.

Editor's note: *Two-year programs are now operated also by the University of Maryland, University of Texas, and the State University of New York at Buffalo.*

Chapter 5

Malaysian Student Departments in the United States

Baharom Othman

Malaysian Student Departments (MSD) have been established by the Government of Malaysia in countries with large numbers of Malaysian students. Currently, besides the formation of MSD in Washington, D.C., with its regional offices in Chicago and Los Angeles, the Government of Malaysia has placed similar offices in the following countries:

1. United Kingdom, with an office in London
2. Australia, with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and Adelaide
3. New Zealand, with an office in Wellington
4. Indonesia, with an office in Jakarta
5. India, with an office in New Delhi
6. Egypt, with an office in Cairo
7. Canada, with an office in Toronto

The various MSD offices are branches of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

The U.S. Malaysian Student Department is responsible for both sponsored and private students studying in the United States. The states included in each of the three regions are:

Eastern Region, MSD, Washington, D.C.: Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine.

Mid-West Region, MSD, Chicago, Ill.: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin.

Western Region, MSD, Los Angeles, Calif.: Arizona, Washington, Montana, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Hawaii.

The main sponsoring bodies that send their students to pursue their higher education in this country, be it to attend short courses, undergraduate, or graduate studies, are currently as follows:

1. Public Services Department
2. Ministry of Education
3. Ministry of Defence
4. Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)
5. Petroleum National Malaysia (PETRONAS)
6. National Electricity Board (NEB)
7. Various State Government Sponsoring Agencies

In order to fulfill the tasks entrusted to this department, a central coordinating body has been set up in Washington, D.C. since March 2, 1974, under the auspices of the Embassy of Malaysia, whereby the director, who is also known as the Education Attache, is responsible to the Secretary-General, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, and the Ambassador of Malaysia to the United States in matters pertaining to education and students' affairs in this country.

To assist him in performing his duties are:

1. The deputy director (Assistant Education Attache), who is responsible for administration, placement of students, data collection, and research.

2. The accountant (Assistant Education Attache), who is responsible for the financial aspects of the administration, namely payment of scholarships, tuition, and proper management of the department's accounts.

3. Student welfare officers (Assistant Education Attaches), who are responsible for the academic and social welfare of Malaysian students.

With the increased influx of Malaysian students into the United States since 1981, the urgency of establishing other branch offices culminated in the approval by the Malaysian Government to have two regional offices, one in Chicago responsible for students' placement and welfare in the Midwest, and another one in Los Angeles, responsible for the western region. Each of these branch offices is headed by a regional director, who is assisted by student welfare officers. These two offices are coordinated by the central office in Washington, D.C. Even though, at present, there are three MSD offices in the United States, all aspects of accounting and payments are still being handled by the accounts section of MSD, Washington, D.C.

The role and functions of Malaysian Student Departments are as follows:

1. Placement of post high school Malaysian-sponsored students in the United States

2. Monitoring of students' academic performance and counseling
3. Maintaining records of all Malaysian students in the United States
4. Payment of scholarships/stipends and tuition fees of Malaysian-sponsored students
5. Maintaining good relationships with institutions of higher learning in the United States
6. Welfare and social counseling of all Malaysian students in the United States
7. Ensuring all sponsored Malaysian students are being insured through the health insurance scheme as approved by the Malaysian Government
8. Acting as advisers to Malaysian Students Associations on various campuses in the United States

The addresses and telephone numbers of the three MSD offices can be found in the References, Part IV. The director, assistant directors and the student welfare officers are prepared to answer any questions foreign student advisers or other university officers may have about Malaysian students. In addition, the accountant will assist in the implementation of scholarship and tuition payments.

Part III
Working with Malaysian Students in the United States

Chapter 6

Malay, Chinese, and Indian Customs

ELAINE M. NOSS

Malaysia's independence as a nation marked a move away from the British colonial pattern. Since that time, the country's economic achievements have placed it among the forefront of Asian nations. Prosperity has brought with it all the machinery and equipment that westerners consider part of a modern life. Beneath the veneer of this "modernization," however, is still a nation with a rich and varied cultural heritage. Although changes have been experienced, the three major ethnic groups—Malay, Chinese, and Indian—have retained a considerable number of the traditions that continue to make Malaysia unique.

Malay Traditions

Malays are Muslims, committed to Islam, which spread into Southeast Asia more than six hundred years ago, largely through the efforts of Indian and Arabian traders. Islam is not only a religious belief, it is also a way of life, whose traditions originated orally and were passed from the first generation of Muslims to those who finally committed them to writing. The precepts of Islamic law cover all phases of life and all forms of prayer, fasting, and ritualistic observances. Essentially, Muslim law expresses for the believer the law of Allah.

Muslim religious practice may be summed up as the "Five Pillars."

1. Repetition of the creed, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammed is the prophet of Allah."
2. The good Muslim reserves time each day for five acts of devotion and prayer. Friday is the special day of public prayer, when the faithful assemble in the mosque.
3. Almsgiving, called "Zakat," consists of gifts to the poor, as well as to various kinds of charities.

4. Everyone observes the fast during the sacred month of Ramadan. No food and drink are to be taken from dawn until sundown.
5. All Muslim men and women are expected to make a pilgrimage (a haj) to Mecca.

The Muslim year is made up of twelve lunar months totalling 354 days. The calendar loses eleven days each year, for which no compensation is made. Thus all festivals move forward each year, until an extra month is inserted.

One of the main festivals observed by Malays is *Hari Raya Idil Fitri* or *Hari Raya Puasa*, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. It is celebrated by offering special prayers, feasting, putting on new clothes, and visiting friends and relatives. The feast of *Hari Raya Haji* marks the tenth day of the twelfth moon in the Muhammedan calendar, when pilgrams in Mecca finalize their status as a "haji," one who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca. The birthday of the Prophet Muhammed is celebrated during the third month of the Muslim calendar.

Malay forms of address are many and complicated. The three categories of titles which follow represent general types, since a person's function may give a higher rank than the title indicates, and since local practice varies widely.

1. *Nobility: Tunku* or *Tengku* are different spellings of the same title, which is loosely equivalent to prince. The title descends through both the male and female sides of the family and is accorded great respect by the Malays. Other titles used in different states are: *Raja*, used instead of Tunku in the State of Perak; *Ungku* or *Engku*, a Johor title denoting a lesser degree of royalty than Tunku or Raja; and *Nik*, an hereditary Kelantan title.
2. *Honorary title: Tun* is the title given to a recipient of the Federation's highest order of chivalry granted to non-royal persons.
3. *Religious and traditional titles:*
   (a) *Syed* is a name as well as a title which traces a direct blood descendency from the Prophet. It is never omitted when addressing a Malay, and all Syeds are accorded the title of *Tuan*. *Sharifah* is the feminine form of Syed and is accorded the same respect. Sharifah is always preceded by *Puan*, the feminine form of Tuan. In addition, Puan is now used as a form of address for all married women.
   (b) *Sheikh* is an Arab title usually passed through the male line. There is, however, a female form, *Siti*, though more rarely used.
   (c) *Haji* (m) and *Hajah* (f) are used for a man and woman, respectively, who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca and

have performed certain required acts during their pilgrimage or haj.

(d) *Encik* is the equivalent of Mr., and *Cik* of Miss. Malays do not inherit a surname but carry their father's given name. Following a man's given name is *bin* and then his father's given name. In the case of a woman, *binte* precedes her father's given name. A married woman retains her maiden name. Some examples:

Ibrahim bin Salleh
Yusuf bin Ibrahim (Ibrahim's son)
Rosnah binte Ibrahim (Ibrahim's daughter)

Chinese Traditions

In the early fifteenth century, Chinese traders and merchants established settlements along the Malaysian coastline, especially in the thriving port city of Malacca. These "Straits Chinese," some of whom would intermarry and be referred to as *Babas* (men) and *Nonyas* (women), adopted Malay as their language, but their culture and cuisine are a blend of both Chinese and Malay influences.

The major Chinese migrations took place in the early nineteenth century. From 1840 on, Chinese miners and traders came hoping to make their fortunes in a land rich in tin and timber. The young men organized themselves according to the traditional social patterns of China. They lived under the clan system, with the strengths of numbers being used to help the less fortunate members. This was the foundation of the generous philanthropy common among wealthy Chinese.

The Chinese in Malaysia have a wide variety of religious beliefs, including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam. Their festivals, however, are basically family festivals rather than religious holidays. The dates of these celebrations are fixed according to the lunar calendar, which has 354 days. To keep the festivals from moving around the calendar, seven months are added to the calendar within a nineteen-year span, with the result that some years have twelve months and others thirteen. There is a celebration of some sort each month.

Chinese New Year is one of the most important celebrations. It begins on the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth month, when the Kitchen God returns to heaven, where he reports on the conduct of the household over which he presides. There is a small ceremony to ensure his giving a good report. He returns on the first day of New Year. On New Year's Eve, the family gathers for dinner, and all members of the family make a great effort to return for this evening

and for the first day of the New Year. Chinese businesses remain closed from the first to the fourth of the New Year, when they reopen with the traditional firecrackers (now outlawed in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Singapore). New Year's Day is a universal birthday for the Chinese, as on this day all are one year older under the Chinese method of reckoning age.

It is important to the Chinese to have all their debts paid by New Year's Day. On that day, they give *ang pow* (red envelopes) containing small amounts of money to their children. They also call on their friends.

The Chinese have their surname as the first of three single syllable names. Mr. and Mrs. are acceptable with Chinese names, and wives adopt the husbands' names. Many Chinese have taken western names which precede the surname, and some use initials in lieu of their given names, as do westerners. Some use both systems, combining a western given name with a Chinese surname and given names.

Indian Traditions

Indian influence came to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, through traders, who by the first century A.D. had learned to take advantage of the prevailing monsoon winds in sailing their ships. Eventually, many of these traders decided to live closer to their market and source of supply, and many settled in the flourishing kingdom of Malacca.

Traces of Indian influence may be detected throughout Southeast Asia in art, religion, and government. Southeast Asian art is Indian-inspired, though its particular forms are indigenous. For example, the Indian classic, "The Ramayana," is recited in the Malay shadow puppet play, "Wayang Kulit," but with local folk tales and myths.

The present Indian population arrived in Malaysia fairly recently, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to work on the coffee and rubber plantations. The language spoken by these people is Tamil, and their religion is Hinduism.

The Hindus have a reverence for everything, and see God in everything. One expression of this reverence is non-violence, applying to animals as well as humans. As a result, most pious Hindus are vegetarians. Hindus worship either at home or in a temple presided over by priests, generally Brahmins. The Brahmins have had their sanctity held above all others, and their position is the highest and most honored. This reverent attitude is still preserved among Hindus today.

The calendar used by the Hindus is primarily based on the lunar cycle, but an extra month is added every three years to bring it into line with the solar calendar.

Deepavali (the Festival of Lamps) is observed by all Indians and is

celebrated during October or November. In Malaysia, it is largely a family celebration; Hindus stay at home and are visited by their friends of other religions.

The Hindu New Year occurs during April. Since it is a family affair, one hears little about it, but it is still a very important occasion.

A small section of the Indian population (about 20 percent) is comprised of Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. The Sikhs have a distinct religion which grew out of Hinduism, but they do not countenance the distinctions made by caste, nor do they recognize the multiplicity of gods. Sikh males are surnamed Singh, which is often followed by a clan name designation. Single Sikh females are surnamed Kaur.

Indian names may be preceded by Mrs., Mr., or Miss, and Indian women take the name of the husband. Christian Indians use western name order, but Hindu Indians incorporate their father's first names rather than surnames. This may be indicated by the father's first initial preceding the son's given name or names, or by the order of son's name followed by s/o (son of) and then the father's first name. Indians with multi-syllabic surnames often shorten them to only the first two syllables.

Chapter 7

Campus Life

ALAN W. BOYD

Malaysian students represent the ethnic diversity of their country. When Malaysian students come to the United States to study, they bring with them educational and cultural expectations that play an important role in their success. Many of them have been educated in boarding school environments. Many have had no experience in a coed school. Those who come from rural areas might have little experience with urban living in their own country. Therefore, even a small American college could be a challenge to their ability to adjust.

In the classroom, they are accustomed to rote learning geared toward final examinations or comprehensive examinations, and are not familiar with the American system of periodic quizzes, tests, and papers. In order to cope with this new educational environment, a group of students will study together, sharing notes and helping each other prepare for exams. On occasion, students have asked one person to take class notes which are then used by others, a questionable practice. Orientation programs and academic advising, emphasizing effective study habits designed to fit American classroom expectations, are especially useful.

Malaysians are used to centralized government control of education rather than the diversified system found in the United States. They know that in Malaysia education is viewed as an important component of national development. "National integration and unity," the "moulding of moral discipline and the inculcation of national values" are known to be major motivations of Malaysians in higher education. Education is thought to be primarily "useful," which means that the government expects most students to study technological or business-related courses (Ahmat p. 115).

Nearly all government-sponsored students are Malays, and are well aware that their educational opportunities, both at home and abroad, are part of an affirmative action program. The government of Malaysia provides opportunities to Malays in order to bring them more fully

into the mainstream of their society. Chinese and Indian students are privately sponsored and are motivated by strong traditional values in education; in many families, education is stressed as the avenue to personal success. Many Chinese and Indian students are committed to Malaysia as their homeland, but they are uncertain how the emphasis upon Malay opportunity will affect their own futures.

This political situation transfers to American campuses. Wherever a reasonably good-sized group of Malaysian students is present, a chapter of the Malaysian Student Association will form. In many places, this group tries to reflect the ethnic diversity of Malaysia. Indians, Chinese, and Malays can belong and participate in its activities, including annual national meetings. On some campuses, the organization has held programs with speakers from Malaysia who discuss the problems related to ethnic integration in the country, as well as other political issues. The Malaysian government strongly encourages these programs.

Another important factor in this cultural dynamic is Islam and its varieties of beliefs. Almost all Malay students are Muslim, although some from Sabah may be Christian. Very few Chinese or Indians adhere to the Muslim faith. Among the Malays, a minority have been strongly affected by the revival of Islam, which has been going on in Malaysia during the last decade or more. These students may form another organization called the Islamic Studies Group. Its main purpose is to influence Malay students to practice a disciplined Muslim life and avoid what are thought to be the temptations of the more free-wheeling American society. Chinese and Indian students do not belong to this group. Many Malays manage to bridge the tensions by belonging to both associations while others withdraw from very active involvement on the campus in order to demonstrate that they are practicing their religion properly.

These organizations hold simultaneous annual meetings at various campuses in the United States. The leaders of local chapters go and discuss issues related to Malaysia and to themselves as students in the United States. The Islamic Studies Group tries to influence the Malaysian Student Association to adhere more closely to reformist Islamic ideas. Their influence is not decisive, but it is very important.

Both organizations can be valuable resources on a campus, often undertaking responsibility for new students, including picking them up at their points of arrival. The Islamic Studies Group, however, can encourage new students to remain isolated from the American community, preventing them from experiencing American culture through home visits or participation in campus activities.

Individually, Malaysian students cope with these tensions, as well as all of the other problems that foreign students from anywhere in the world have to face, in a variety of ways. They often try to live

together in residence halls or off campus, so that they are surrounded by familiar customs. Such arrangements enable them to cook Malaysian food, avoiding problems in dining halls with food that is religiously unclean, as well as unfamiliar. Muslims never eat pork. Any product of the pig is forbidden, including hotdogs, hamburgers or any other mixed meat that contains pork, and any food fried or cooked in pork fat. Products marked "kosher" would be prepared according to Muslim tradition. If a campus has a residence hall requirement, this can raise problems with the housing office.

On the other hand, allowing Malaysian students, especially the youngest ones, to be released from a housing requirement deprives them of the experience of integrating into the campus community. Residence halls bring students together in a living situation that encourages new friends and stimulates intercultural learning. American students also can benefit from having Malaysian roommates. One solution is to provide Malaysian students with alternative cooking facilities, while continuing to require that they live in residence halls.

Currently, the Malaysian government is sending greater numbers of students to the United States as sophomores, juniors, and seniors, in hopes that these more mature students will become increasingly involved in university life and less concerned with political issues. Older undergraduate students are often leaders of the Malaysian student organizations and play the role of mentor to younger ones. What effects the government's efforts will have remains to be seen. If the experiment works, it will change the character of the Malaysian community on the campus.

Foreign student advisers and others concerned about Malaysian students on their campuses can take a variety of steps to assist them. The most important is to keep the lines of communication open. The leadership of the Malaysian Student Association is very important. If they are well informed on changes in policies or procedures, their efforts will support the overall integration of the students into the campus.

Foreign student offices should try to set up a central communication point in their offices so that maintenance and tuition payments can be made without delay, and other periodic notices, including medical insurance information, can be passed on to students. By distributing these materials through foreign student offices, minimal contact with students will be maintained.

Malaysian students, like most foreign students, are very interested in news from home. The Malaysian Student Department can make available to campuses several publications from Kuala Lumpur. These include two newspapers, the *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia*, the *Malaysian Digest*, and a monthly news summary, simply called *Malaysia*. These publications can be made available to students through

a foreign student office or in the library of a college or university. If a reasonable number of students are on a given campus, the Malaysian Student Department will also send these publications directly to the Malaysian Student Association.

Other publications which have also been very popular with Malaysian students, and which can be purchased through subscriptions, are the *Far Eastern Economic Review, Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Malaysian Business,* and *Asia Week*. Information about all of these journals can be obtained from the Ohio University Malaysian Resources Center. The center can also make available back issues on loan to other college or university libraries.

Admission officers in particular should be in touch with the Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange, as well as the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. These offices support Malaysian educational efforts in the United States and are very willing to facilitate the application process, visa, and immigration regulations.

Financial support of sponsored Malaysian students is spare. Most students can function reasonably well on the maintenance funds they receive, partly by sharing costs with each other and partly by carefully budgeting their funds. It is a good idea to make available short-term loans to help students through tight situations. In addition, campuses need to keep sponsors and the Malaysian Student Departments fully informed as to changes in tuition and fees and reasonable estimates of expenses.

If a sponsored student decides to change his/her program for any reason, agreement of the sponsor is necessary. The best way to obtain this information is through the Malaysian Student Department in Washington, D.C. Although the government is not totally inflexible in cases of academic difficulty, the primary motivation of scholarship support is to meet expected manpower needs. Students cannot unilaterally choose to study subjects different from their original program.

Malaysian students have been a welcome part of virtually every campus they have been on. They are a pleasure to get to know and to work with. The more we understand their backgrounds, the more we will be able to enjoy them as friends and colleagues and, even more importantly, the more we can help them to derive the greatest benefit from their time with us.

Part IV
References

Bibliography

Selected Bibliography

It is difficult to select the most important publications available on Malaysia. The first three highlighted references were selected because they are current, readily available, and deal directly with educational concerns. The other two are introductory to Malaysian culture from a western point of view. Although both are simplistic travelers' guides, and are a little outdated, they do provide a beginning. The rest of the bibliography is for those interested in delving a little more deeply into things Malaysian. I am sure there are many more books and articles. If anyone has a suggestion for a future revision, I hope they will let us know.

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Where used by the contributor, the British spelling of certain words has been maintained in this volume.

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